

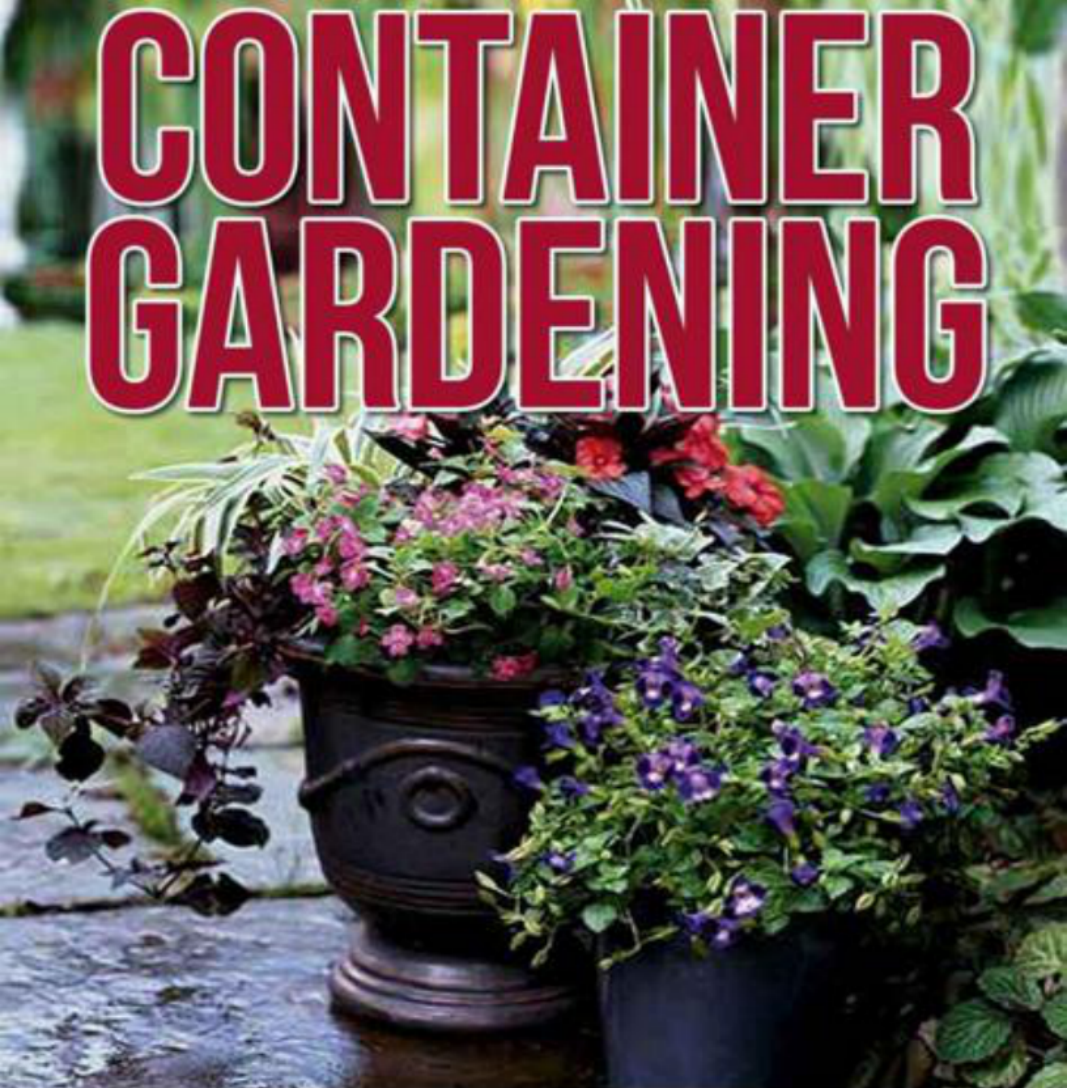
Container Gardening: How To Grow Food, Flowers and Fun

Cook, Will

VISIT...

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CONTAINER GARDENING



**HOW TO GROW FOOD, FLOWERS
AND FUN AT HOME**

WILL COOK

CONTAINER GARDENING

How To Grow Gorgeous Gardens Indoors With Ease

Will Cook

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WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

Everyone loves plants; but for people in the city gardening is not an easy option. Lack of space is one of the major peeves for those who love plants, greenery and gardening. Even when you do have space, very often you need to move and at such time, you do not have the heart to invest your love, effort and money in building a garden that might be destroyed after you leave the house.



There is also a growing awareness and demand for organic food and container gardening can provide plenty of organic food right in your home. For an apartment dwelling gardener, container gardening can be the means to grow an inexpensive garden with low maintenance. For others with limited space, entryways, balconies and window sills can be places for container gardening with lovely pots used not only for ornamentals, but also for growing herbs, small fruits, vegetables and salad crops as well as bonsai trees. You can have organically grown herbs, vegetable, and even fruits right at your finger tips. Isn't that the ultimate reward for a gardener?

Many people feel that container gardening is too difficult or too cumbersome to start and maintain. Nothing could further from truth. Anyone can start a container garden, even if you have no idea about gardening, containers, plants, *etc.* you can still start and set up a very beautiful – not to mention fruitful – container garden.

This book is for everyone out there who wants to enjoy gardening whether this is indoors or outdoors. This is an e-book that will take you by the hand and help you set up a garden from ground zero. Do not worry if you have no experience with gardening; all you need is to read this e-book and by the time you are finished with it, you will be able to build your own lovely mobile garden inside your home or outside it.

The container garden is one that you could move anywhere you want to go without any trouble. Additionally, you will enjoy the admiring – and sometime very envious – glances of your friends and neighbors.

Are you ready for creating your own lovely container garden? Start right now – with reading this e-book.

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CHAPTER 1. WHAT IS CONTAINER GARDENING?

Contrary to common belief, you need not have acres of open land to grow a beautiful garden – whether this is of flowers or edibles. You can very well do it in containers. All you have to do is consider each container as a small plot private to each plant. With the help of containers you can build a most beautiful and useful garden within your home or outside.



The plus point here is that anyone can make a great container garden. It is like the palette of a painter – inviting and limitless. This is the best project for a novice who wants to grow green fingers. The fact that this can be done in the smallest possible places adds to the excitement. It does not matter whether you have too much sun or too less – there are enough plants that you could use to match your conditions.

In other words, container gardening is just a portable garden. This type of gardening comes minus the troubles of a regular garden (such as weeding and most pests), yet with all its benefits. Do not think or limit yourself with thinking that container gardening means indoor gardening – though this is mostly where it is used most. A container garden can be set up outdoors as well. In fact, most people who move a lot use this model so they can take their garden with them when it is time they move. Some of the most beautiful outdoor gardens can be container gardens.

You can interchange the outdoor container plants with the indoor ones and keep changing the looks of your garden every season. This type of gardening can provide you with hours of the most delightful pastime. You will find immense delight and joy in what you can do with container gardening.

WHY START A CONTAINER GARDEN?

The reasons to start a container gardening are many and unique to every person. Some do it because they want to see greenery around them and flowers make them happy. Some do it because they want organic vegetables and herbs round the year. Some do it because they can unleash their creativity streak, and yet others do it because it helps them get the relaxation they need to keep their lives productive and healthy.

The benefits of a container gardening are innumerable but here are a few that could help you strengthen your resolve to start one:

It Is Practical

Container gardening is very practical. You can start with the minimum investment and number of plants and expand it gradually, as per your time and budget. In this way you could pay attention to each plant one at a time and you can learn on your feet. This would help you to build your garden with ease without stress or difficulty.

It Can Be Started Anywhere

No matter how small is your home, you can always have some space to use for a container garden. You can use your window sill, your patio, the underside of the staircase, a wall, the balcony and so on. Wherever there is space to put a container you can have a plant growing. A container can be as small as a tea-cup or goldfish bowl and as large as a giant bucket.

It Is Economical

It does not cost much to make a container garden, nor maintain it. Some people buy the containers they need; but you could use whatever you have in your home. For example, you could start your garden in tea containers, discarded boxes, clay pots, cups, buckets – anything at all. You could paint and beautify them and convert them into some very creative and interesting looking pots. These would cost you next to nothing.

It Is Beautiful

A container garden can make your heart sing every time you see it. You can change the whole look in your home with just a few plants here and there. Your kitchen, your bathroom, your living room would feel like they have come alive when you put greenery around. Seasonal flowers can be delightful with their color and fragrance. Evergreens will calm you and keep your air clean as well.

It Is Healthy

It is already an accepted fact that gardening in general and green

plants in particular contribute to maintaining your health. It helps de-stressing your mind and fights off most stress-related health problems. It cleans the air, increases the humidity and regulates temperature in your home. Whether you have a garden outdoors or indoors, plants will always offer you great health benefits.

It Can Generate A Neat Income

You can grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers and sell them to people who want to start their container garden, but have no patience to start from ground zero. You can have a nursery where you grow seedlings that you could sell to interested people or directly to the local garden shops. You can generate a good stream of income with your container garden – if you wish to have it that way.

CHAPTER 2. WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

Before you start your container garden, you need to decide on what to use to make your garden. This would include:

type of container

type of plants

location of the containers

gathering the necessary gardening tools

material that tells you everything about your chosen plants

type of soil you need

fertilizers and pesticides

As with every task, you need to gather enough information before you venture into it. The Internet is full with guides and advice and you will find complete information on every plant you want to grow in your container garden. Before you start the garden, ensure that you have all the information you need regarding every plant of your choice.

If you find that the plant is a little capricious, leave it for a later time when you have gathered enough experience to grow it. Choose plants that are hardy and require least care because this will encourage you in your endeavor and will give you the necessary experience to grow more difficult (but beautiful/ useful) plants later on.

CHOOSING YOUR CONTAINERS

You can choose any type of container when you plan to start your “garden in a pot”. There are plenty of choices for containers – you have plastic, terracotta, concrete, wood, ceramic, and even metal. Be careful however, that you do not use any pot that once contained any type of poisonous or toxic material; especially if you are planning to grow something edible.



There are many things around your home that you could choose to use for a container such as:

Empty tea/ tomato ketchup or coffee cans (you could spray-paint them in bright colors, to improve their looks and get them match your interior décor).



The pool your children have overgrown, the plastic sandbox, *etc.* These are best used in the backyard or outdoor vegetable container gardens for they are large in size.

Large plastic or glass jars. Try contacting the local caterer in our neighborhood to ask for their large food-service containers.

You could also use soda bottles or plastic milk jugs after you cut them in half.

You can take the half-gallon paper cartons or empty yogurt cups and use them to grow your seedlings for transplant.

You could even use old tires as both outdoor and indoor containers in the garden. Beware that some scientists are of the opinion that this practice tires are okay both from the point of view of safety and utility.

Cost And Durability

Check out the suitability of each type of pot in the list below:

metal pots are cheap and light (aluminum), but not too good for the plants for they could keep the plants too cold or too hot (depending upon the climate);

concrete pots can be very cheap (but the elaborate ones could be quite costly) and heavy but are not good in cold season (if kept outdoors);

wooden pots are medium in cost and weight and they are good for cold season (if kept outdoors);

terracotta pots could be quite affordable and medium in weight;

however they are not suitable for cold season.

The rule of the thumb is that the taller the plant, the larger the container needs to be because the roots will grow accordingly. This is why bonsai plants are grown in trays – the shorter the roots, the shorter the plant will grow.

The best choice is a pot that is porous because it looks natural, but this type of container could deteriorate quickly if it is exposed to moisture and freezing temperatures too much. You will need to be careful to bring these porous containers inside during winter months – if your garden is outdoors – for they tend to crack during excessive cold. These pots are not expensive to buy, but because you need to change them often it may become expensive to sustain.

Non-porous pots and glazed pottery look great too and have a much longer life span. They are more expensive than the porous pots, but because they last longer they work out cheaper in the long run. They are also okay with the cold, and hence could be left outdoors during winter months. Non-porous pots – with the exception of glazed pottery – are recommended for growing plants like lettuce or pansies, which grow in the spring. These pots can survive the impact of frost that is common during early spring.

The size of the container should accommodate the roots of the plants when fully grown. When planting vegetables such as tomatoes, eggplant, pepper, cucumbers, cabbage, and beans in a minimum of five-gallon containers. Beets, carrots, lettuce, and green onions can be planted in three-gallon containers. Most herbs and radishes grow well in containers of one gallon or less. With flowers, a general rule is the larger the height of the flower, the more root mass is produced thus requiring a larger container.

Weight And Placement

Choose your container according to your needs. In other words, you need to consider the fact that you will shift the pots from one place to another at some point of time. Hence, you should choose your containers accordingly. In case you do have to shift the pots often - and you want to plant large plants – place the containers on frames with wheels. A skateboard would be a great choice for a platform for large containers that need to be shifted periodically.

In case you love large plants the containers should be large; for short plants and herbs you can have smaller pots. The size of the container should accommodate the roots of the plants when fully grown. For planting vegetables such as pepper, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant,

cabbage, and beans 5-gallon containers would be required. For lettuce, beets, green onions, and carrots 3-gallon containers would be most suitable. For the majority of herbs 1-gallon (or less) containers would be okay. For flowers, judge the size of the container by the height of the flower; the taller the flower, the more root mass will be there and hence, the larger the container required.

Drainage

One of the most important factors when you choose a container is drainage. Plants will soon wilt if the soil that is constantly waterlogged. In water logged soils the roots will rot, gradually killing the plant. Check your container for drainage holes; if there are none or too less in number (or too small) make some holes in the bottom.



Keep in mind that porous containers such as clay and wood pots would lose moisture much faster than other types; however, these types are excellent for air movement at the root level, which means that your plants would grow best. With metal, plastic, and glazed containers – which are non-porous – the water would be retained much longer, which would restrict air movement and hence root growth. This is why drainage holes are especially important in non-porous containers. You may like to use a container-insert if you prefer to use expensive and decorative pots that do not have drainage holes. Be careful that the insert does not rest in water.

WHAT PLANTS SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Sky is the limit for your choice on this aspect. You can choose whatever you please, provided the climate suits the plants of your preference. For people who love organic food from their container garden check out the following suggestions:

Salsa Favorite

Plant jalapeño peppers, bush-type tomato, and cilantro. You can mix and match all of these in one largish container with the cilantro seeds around the edges of the container. This will not also look charming, but also can help you make a great salsa whenever you want.

Pesto Mix

For this popular dish you may choose to plant garlic, basil, parsley, and chives. All of these are herbs that can bring the best flavor in your favorite dish.

Color Friendly

For those who love aesthetics as much as what they are growing - planting colorful plants is a great option. Try planting red tomato, purple and/ or white eggplant, orange, green and yellow peppers, and green chilies; you could have purple and green leaves basil around the edges of the container.

Herbs Special

Great cooking requires a number of exotic herbs, which you could have right in your home or garden when you love cooking. If you love exotic and aromatic herbs, try your hand at growing marjoram, tarragon, thyme, chives, parsley, and chervil. You could use this in soups and many baked exotic (or festive-time) dishes. For herbs you will need to grow your own seedlings or buy the pots with the herbs already planted; this is because transplanting is not very easy nor very fruitful.



Chinese Cooking Garden

Do you love Chinese food? Use your container gardening to grow some of the most popular veggies for this type of cooking. You may choose to plant narrow (or Chinese) eggplant, bok choy, all colors hot peppers and cauliflower among others.

Salad Special

Focus on what you need to make a great salad and create a lovely container garden with the plants you need. Start with sweet peppers and tomato in the middle of the container or at around the edges; then fill it in with cucumber, onions and radishes plants and leafy lettuces. You would have not only a beautiful combination of edibles, but also a superb source for a very healthy salad bowl.

Soup Favorites

If you love soups and love to do it just the right way – as it is given in the grandma's recipe – have containers filled with thyme, scallions, lemongrass, parsley, chervil and chives.

Other Vegetables That Are Container-Friendly

You can plant many other vegetables as per your preference. You could buy the seeds from your local garden shop and ask his advice for the best time to do so. Most seed packets will have clear instruction on how to plant the vegetables and when to plant them. Normally, the best time is about 4-6 weeks before the last frost; the date of the last frost is normally around 15th of March. Some of the vegetables which thrive in containers are Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, beets, carrots, kohlrabi, turnips, radishes, potatoes, rutabaga, spinach, parsnips, parsley, mustard greens, Swiss chard, collards, and endive among others.

Bonsai or Dwarf Plants/ Trees

Dwarf fruit trees are extremely beautiful and fascinating. These plants would beautify the landscape wherever they are placed. If done right, you could derive tremendous pleasure from the fact they would flower and produce miniature fruits – on which could happily snack all day long. Fortunately, growing bonsai trees is a lot of fun, while their requirements are very modest.

Be careful that these types of plants require a high-humidity environment; if your place is situated in a dry climate region you would need to mist the plants several times a week. These plants are also thirsty for long-time sunlight (though direct sunlight would burn it) and watering as potted plants generally do. You could try your hand with tangerine varieties, dwarf lemon, lime and orange trees.



Citrus trees are among the most popular choices for container gardening because they could be shifted indoors during winter months and the plant will continue to yield fruits. You will need to ensure that all your plants are doubly protected and secure during the winter days. Trees such as cherries, plums, dwarf apples, and pears, will

require additional protection during winter.

FLOWERS THAT LOVE CONTAINERS

There are two types of flowers: (1) flowers which require full sun (require 6 or more hours of direct sun) to grow well, and (2) flowers which require shade to develop to their potential. You have here five examples of each type of flower that you could choose.

However, keep in mind that the best way to start is with plants that are least capricious but still beautiful. Both these attributes would encourage you to learn more about container gardening and promote your enthusiasm for increasing the number of your pots.

Sun Loving Plants For Your Container Garden

Millions Bells (*Calibrachoa*) – the million bells comes in about all imaginable colors from pure white to various shades of deep purple and pink. This is a flower that not only is easy to grow, but also looks great in almost any type of container indoor or outdoor. The delightful blossoms are known to attract bees and butterflies as well as the stunning hummingbirds. The blooms will go strong throughout the summer if you are careful about fertilizer and watering it will last half through the fall. These plants do require constant watering and a very good drainage; waterlogged soil would result in rotting roots and a dead plant.



Verbena (*Verbena officinalis*) – This is a hot favorite for those who love container gardens because this is one plant that will flower continuously throughout all summer and even a good part of the fall. It has an excellent presence and it will look good in any type of container as it will fill spaces and spill over edges covering the containers with its delightfully clustered blossoms.



This is a flower that comes in many colors of verbena, *i.e.* from bright red to deep - almost dark - blue. These long-term bloomers are extremely strong and unassuming. They will even survive drought as long as they have container with good drainage. You need to keep in mind that these flowers like most flowering plants, require the soil to be fertilized every 2-3 of weeks. To ensure that you have them flower continuously, you would need to remove the dead flowers. These flowers are great for attracting butterflies.

Cape Daisy (*Osteospermum*) - These plants are very hardy, bright and cheerful and come in wide variety of colors that range from a deep pink to purple, melon, and white.



They do not require you to remove the dead flowers as they will continue flowering unabated throughout the summer. However, the plants certainly will definitely look much better if you do remove them (dead flowers). They require regular fertilization and good drainage. If they have these two things, they will last well into fall.

Bush Violet (*Browallia*) – this flower will give some of the most wonderful blossoms with their rich blue color and velvety texture and wide smiling looks. This is a plant that will go well with almost everything. Owing to its height, which is about 12-14 inches, this is a great choice for planting in the center of a mixed container garden.



The Bush violet is happy all the time and requires least attention. It does require to be protected from too much wind, if you have any in your area. Another factor that is very important for the growth of this plant is drainage. With regular fertilization, this is a plant that will flower strongly and continuously throughout the summer and a good part of the fall as well.

Pentas (***Pentas lanceolata***) – also known as Egyptian Star Flower, this is another hot favorite in container gardens owing to their very beautiful clusters of star-shaped flowers. Butterflies and hummingbirds love these flowers, especially the red and dark pink varieties. They are happy with least care and will bloom even when exposed to drought and heat. It does need good soil, regular fertilizing and good drainage. If it has all that your pentas would happily bloom until the fall.



Shade Loving Plants For Your Container Garden

Fuchsia (*Fuchsia*) – it is believed that these flowers are a fussy lot, but this is not true. The fact is that these flowers are among the loveliest plants you can grow in containers in shade.

You will find that these flowers will bloom happily the whole of summer. When the fall sets and you bring them inside they will continue flowering until winter. Fuchsias look best when planted in hanging baskets, but can also look very good in mixed garden containers. They are especially beautiful when they are paired with contrasting colors plants; but complimentary color flowers would make a beautiful arrangement as well.



Their reputation for being fussy could be because they tend to wilt without the right amounts of fertilizer and water. Fuchsias need their soil moist at all times; not wet. They also will wilt when exposed to hot and dry conditions.

Wishbone Flower (*Torenia*) - the wishbone flower spreads cheer wherever it is planted for it will flower all through the summer especially when left in full shade. This flower tolerates heat well and is not fussy about anything.

To flower well, it requires regular fertilizing and watering until frost; you need not remove the dead flowers in order to have it flower well. You can use the Wishbone flower alone in its own container or in combinations with other flowers.

They are commonly used in hanging baskets, but they do well in window boxes also. Their only demand is that the container has good drainage. These flowers are relatively short in height - 2-6 inches - and will spill over the side of the container filling it up totally.

Coral Bells (*Heucheras*) - these are the best flowers you could ever have in containers in shade. They are so resilient that you could almost say they are indestructible and come in a wide range of colors. Coral bells love the shade, though they will do well in some sun. They are quite drought tolerant and do not need to have the dead flowers removed to ensure continuous flowering.



Coral bells are very colorful; you will find them in colors that range from peach to limes to black-purple. Hummingbirds and butterflies are quite attracted to these flowers. To ensure that the plants continue to flower, you would do good to remove flower stems after they have bloomed.

Begonias (*Begonia*) - there are many varieties of begonias each one more beautiful than the other. They are bright, colorful and extremely resilient. Some begonias even have colorful leaves. What is most interesting about this plant is that they have some of the most amazing flowers and they will stay in bloom throughout the summer through late in the fall.



These flowers need good drainage or they will suffer from root rot. Most will be happy in full shade, while some varieties would need filtered shade. All flowering begonias require regular fertilizing and misting of the leaves and the soil.

Coleus (*Coleus blumei*) - Coleus are exceptionally well adapted for shade container gardening. They demand little attention; some will even thrive in full sun. The colors, leaves shapes, and even blooms are widely varied, interesting and exciting. Paired with other plants the coleus can look spectacular. You can have lots of fun with match-and-mixing this plant. No matter where you are putting it, they will steal the show.



STARTING SEEDLINGS

Most seed packets come with detailed instructions. You will learn about how deep to plant your seeds, which is very important information. Some seedlings do not fare too well when transplanted, so you would need to plant them directly in the container that you mean for the plants.

The instructions on the packet will also indicate how long it should take for the seed to germinate and how many weeks before the last frost you should start your seeding. A very important tip here is to keep the seed packet until you transplant the seedling; sometimes you will need some information that was given on the packet and it would be terrible if at that time, you would have thrown the packet.

Self Watering, Sterile Mixes Are Best

The best would be to use self-watering seed starting systems, which are becoming increasingly popular. There are many types you could choose from; talk to the shopkeeper of your garden shop for advice.

For soil, use only sterile planting mix as this would protect the seeds (and later the plants) from any type of disease. Keep in mind that most sterile planting mix packets do not come with built-in nutrients. While initially the seedlings will get all nutrition they need from the seed itself, they would need fertilizer as soon as you can see the new leaves. At that time, you will need to apply a diluted solution of liquid fertilizer to ensure proper growth.

The Seedlings Need Light

You need to provide enough light for your seedlings to grow well. If there is insufficient natural light the seedlings would not be able to grow into healthy robust plants. They will turn out to be spindly and many of these would not be able to make it into a full grown plant. If there is not enough sunlight, you could easily set up an artificial light system without burning a hole in your pocket.



Use 1-2 fluorescent bulbs at a distance of about 2-4 inches from the seed tray. You also need to install a few timers as this would set you free from checking on the plants every now and then. Once the first leaves break out ensure that the seedlings have about 14 hours of light. They will grow faster, stronger and better.

Ventilation is Important, Too

Seeds thrive best when planted outside in the midst of nature. They need to feel the sun, rain and wind. When planted indoors you need to mimic – to perfection or as close you could go to it - Mother Nature. Most people start their seedling germination process in basements because that part of the house is often most undisturbed area. However, the basement or any other “special place” you choose may not have proper ventilation or light.

Ventilation hence, is one among the most important factors for developing healthy seedlings, robust roots and strong stems. You could use a fan to create the required ventilation for your seedlings. This will ensure that you will get sturdier plants.

SOIL

A very important factor is the quality of the soil you use for your container garden. Of course, you could choose soil-less seedling mixtures for your potted vegetable garden as this would ensure no pests – especially, fungal rot. You may always buy readymade potting mix or you could make an excellent soil mix at home with vermiculite, peat moss, and lime to regulate pH levels of the soil. While readymade potting mixes do not require additional fertilizer for about 4-6 months, homemade soil mix will need fertilizer either applied when plant is moved in or after the seedling sprouts.



For those interested to make their own soil mix, try your hand with the following two recipes for best container-garden soil:

Soil Mix No.1

Take two quarts each of vermiculite and peat moss and mix to it one teaspoon of lime. Use the mix for fertilizing the plants as soon as the seeds start germinating. This mix will make enough soil to fill three 6-inch tall containers.

Soil Mix No.2

Take one part each of sand, peat moss and loam and mix it with half-a-cup of garden lime for every 5 gallon bucket you use.

Soil Mix No.3

Take two bushels of vermiculite and peat moss and add to it one cup (250 grams) of lime. You can fill about 45 6-inch tall containers with this mixture. Do store in sterilized containers if there are any leftovers.

Soil Mix No.4

If you are running short of loam, use the following mix for your

container plants. Take two parts each of sand, peat moss and only one part of compost. Add to it half-a-cup of garden lime for every 5 gallons of soil.

Replace your potting soil every year; a well fertilized soil means healthier and more beautiful and fruitful plants. Ensure that you have at hand some very basic tools to help you such as gardening gloves, a small rake, watering container with spout and a small trowel.

FERTILIZER

All plants that are kept in containers will need regular fertilizing. The major plant nutrients are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). Choose a balanced N-P-K fertilizer (10:10:10 ratio) that you can add to your watering can. For continuous feeding – which is required to produce steady growth and bloom - mix at one-tenth of the recommended rate every time you water your plants.

Each plant, flower and tree will have different requirements for feeding. Find out all information about the plants you are growing so you would know exactly how much fertilizer they need; at what interval; how you should apply it to the soil.

It is highly recommended that you use a water soluble fertilizer so you could feed your plant every time you are watering it. The best would be to have your own home (mini) compost maker. In this way you would be able to use your own organic fertilizer and also have a perpetual source of earthworms – the best friends of the farmer. Their contribution is always priceless; be it in the outdoor garden or your container garden.

Fertilizer You Could Make At Home

There are many types of fertilizers, but of course the best are the organic ones. While you can buy some very good organic fertilizers from your local gardening shop, you could also make some of your own:

Kelp tea – add a handful of seaweed to a 5 gallon bucket of water. Stir every day. After a few days, strain the liquid and use it to fertilize all your plants. Drench the soil and the leaves.

Manure tea or simple compost tea – add 5 quarts of manure (can be fresh) or compost to 3 gallons of warm water in a 5 gallon bucket. Let it steep for a week, strain, and use. Water around your plants and avoid getting any on the leaves.

Blood meal - mix 1 tablespoon with 1 gallon of water and let it steep for a week. Water around your plants and avoid getting any on the leaves.

WATER

Water is a very important factor if you are aiming to have a healthy and well-adjusted container garden. Since containers restrict the growth of the root systems they would typically need more frequent watering than their landscape counterparts.

You also need to be sure that the plants are watered regularly so the soil would be maintained moist NOT wet. Be careful that the soil should not be waterlogged or it would kill the plant. Allow the soil to dry a little before you water again. Keep in mind that the water requirements for your plant would change concurrent to the weather outside.

LIGHTING

Most plants love the sun, while some thrive in low light or shade. Hence, some plants require more sun than the others. Research carefully about each plant you are growing and learn all the details about it. How much fertilizer, water or light it requires. In most cases, the packet of seeds will carry in detailed instructions on how to grow the plant. It will tell you if the plant requires full sun, partial shade, or total shade to thrive. This is important to know and will help you determine where to place your container.

In case you do not have access to adequate sun nor you could rotate it to the place within your home where it could get the light quality it requires, do not despair. You can easily rig an inexpensive system of artificial lighting and that will provide the required light for your plants. One or two fluorescent bulbs held 1-4 feet away from the plants would be quite good.

You will know what best you could choose for your plants once you research about the needs of each one of the plant you love. Each type of plant has its own needs and requirements. The more you know about each one, the better you could provide what they need and the better they would grow.

FIVE KEY MISTAKES TO AVOID

As a new gardener, many people commit mistakes that compromise their efforts to grow a great container garden. Fortunately, most plants are sturdy and can withstand quite a number of mistakes. Nonetheless, knowing what would sabotage efforts would be extremely helpful.

SEEDLINGS DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH LIGHT

You need to know that seedlings require plenty of light. No matter what anyone tells you, more often than not you would not be providing enough natural light to your seeds to ensure that they grow into robust seedlings. Even south-facing windows – where the sun shines brightly – are often not enough. To be sure that the seeds get sufficient light, the best is to use artificial lighting. Purchase grow lights, which are designed specifically for growing seeds and indoor plants.

Alternatively, if you are looking for an affordable way out, install fluorescent bulbs in addition to a warm bulb. Install the lights in such a manner that you could change their height if you need that type of change. This is especially important when your seedlings are growing. For seedlings you need the light as close as possible, say 2-3 inches away. When the first leaves of your seedlings appear, the lights should be pushed up to a little and kept on for about 12-16 hours daily. A timer that will switch on and off the lights as per the requirement of your plants would be extremely helpful.

BAD MEASUREMENT OF WATER

You need to know exactly how much water your seedlings/ plants need. Give too much or too little water – and they end up dead. This is perhaps the most challenging part of container gardening – especially for the seedlings. This is because seedlings are too fragile, and hence, there is not much room for error regarding watering. The rule of the thumb is that you should keep the soil moist and NOT wet. Do everything in your power to ensure that the containers drain well and at the same time the plants have enough water.

Check out these tips that would be of invaluable help:

do cover your container with plastic until seeds germinate

water your plants from the bottom; this will means less chance to flood or waterlog the plant since it will soak in the water gradually, through holes in their pots;

check carefully all your plants at least once in 2-3 days;

invest in and install a self-watering seed starting system;

Try making a self-watering seed starter

Planting The Seeds Too Deep

Seeds are very touchy when it comes to the depth at which they need to be planted. While some seeds require total darkness to germinate, some need intense light. You will normally find this information on the seed packet. In case the packet does not provide enough information on the packet, check other sources. It is very important that know all about each plant that you choose for your container garden. You need to have all the details right from the seed to the adult plant.

In case you do not find the right information in spite of your research, use the rule of thumb – which is to plant the seeds 2-3 times as deep as they are wide. This might not be very helpful always; but when in doubt, do it on shallow side for if you plant your seeds too deep they will die.

There are seeds that need light to germinate. For these types of seeds you will have to take care of two important things, *i.e.* the seed is in contact with the starting medium; (ii) but not covered enough to lose the light. To do this, you will need to first press down the seeding medium gently to ensure a firm surface. Once that is done, place your seed on top of your medium and very gently push down, ensuring that the seed is still exposed, while it is in close contact with the medium for its nutrition.

INADEQUATE TEMPERATURE

For seeds to germinate, the ideal temperature needs to be maintained at about 65-75F degrees. You will find that your garden shop sells special 'seedling mats' that can be kept under your seeds to keep them warm.

Alternatively, you can also use a small heater that is equipped with timer to ensure that your seedlings get enough heat for as much time it is required. You need to continue with this until the seeds sprout. This is the milestone that tells you that the seedlings are tough enough to last some amount of temperature oscillation. Keep in mind that once they sprout, whatever light you offer them through natural or artificial means would be enough.

CHAPTER 3. DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONTAINER GARDENS

The types of container gardens you could create are infinite. As long as you have any imagination, you could have a different type of garden every day – if you may. For your inspiration and to start your creative juices flowing, check out the following few examples of some great types of container gardens:

TERRARIUM

You can make a terrarium in less than an hour. This is quite an effortless task, quick to make, easy to maintain and often quite inexpensive. You can save quite a lot of money by shopping for the containers at consignment shops, discount stores or flea markets where you can find great looking glass containers, goldfish bowls and other types of jars very cheap.

Use plants that are small, which would cost about \$2-3 each, so your terrarium - depending on the size of your jars - can be completed within \$20-\$40. Terrariums also make wonderful and impressive gifts, even for people who consider themselves gardening-challenged.



Plants You Could Use To Make Your Terrarium

There are many plants you could use to make your terrarium. You could start with the plants listed here and gradually as you grow in experience move on to other types.

Artillery ferns (*Pilea microphylla*) - this is not actually a fern but a members of the Pilea family. The name “Artillery ferns” is derived from their ability to shoot their seeds with a popping sound often over quite a distance. These plants are beautiful, delicate and have a very interesting texture. They require medium to bright light that reaches them indirectly and a humid-warm environment. They need very little care and are easy to grow.

Polka Dot Plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*) – These plants are pink, red and silver in color. They are stunningly cheerful and easy to take care of. They thrive in bright, indirect light and may need to be trimmed a little when they grow too tall or look too spindly.

Aluminum plant (*Pilea cadierei*) – this is a plant native to Vietnam. It thrives on low-medium light and humid-warm temperatures. The leaves of this plant come with pretty iridescent white markings. This plant grows fast and hence, you should trim it often to ensure that it does not overgrow your terrarium. This plant is easy to propagate; all you need to do is take a small cutting and plant it in moist soil.

Red-Veined prayer plant (*Maranta leuconeura erythroneura*) – this is a plant of rare beauty. Its name is derived from its habit to fold up their leaves at night, which looks like the whole plant is praying with folded hands. Prayer plants prefer medium, indirect light. If the plant is unhappy it will communicate it to you by not opening its leaves even in the daylight. Prayer plants like to be warm, so keep your terrarium away from cold windows or cold drafts.

Baby's tears (*Helxine soleirolii*) - this is a very popular plant also known as 'Pollyanna vine', 'angel's tears', 'Corsican's curse', 'mind-your-own-business', 'mother of thousands' and 'peace-in-the-home'. It is named 'curse' because in the right conditions, this plant can be highly invasive with ability of taking over whole gardens. Fortunately, in a terrarium, it behaves quite well. This plant prefers bright light and consistent moisture.

Button fern (*Pellaea rotundifolia*) - There is something about a small button fern that is wonderfully attractive. The plants grow slightly mop-headed, yet delicate and elegant at the same time. Button ferns grow well in bright filtered light and consistent moist conditions, which just the right atmosphere in a terrarium.



Creeping fig (*Ficus pumila*) - this is a small plant with variegated heart-shaped leaves that will make a lovely addition to any terrarium. The creeping fig is a perennial climbing vine, which can be easily trained to grow up on structures. This aspect can make it a valuable addition to a large terrarium. This plant loves bright indirect light but will also tolerate shade quite well. For propagation, take a branch of this plant and place it in water until it grows roots; take the rooting and plant it where you want.

Crotons (*Codiaeum variegatum*) – this is one plant that can really add plenty of glamour to your terrariums. Its shiny, colorful and thick leaves come in a wide variety of shapes. Also known as 'Gold Dust,' the croton is among the narrow leaved varieties. It loves bright light, and is not normally recommended as terrarium plants, but they do fare very well in open jars types.

SUCCULENT PLANT CONTAINER GARDEN

Growing succulent plants in a container garden is not only easy, but also greatly satisfying. These plants come in an amazing variety of colors and leaf textures and their flowers can be mind-blowing. You will find that combining them is a lot of fun and can result in some brilliantly combined container gardens.

There are so many colors and textures that you could use to make a stupendous container garden. You need to pay attention – when you use succulent plants - that the container is the key here. This is because the roots of these types of plants are quite shallow and hence, you could use small bowls or dishes to make the garden look great. You need to pay attention to just one thing, *i.e.* ensure that the plants have good drainage.



There are hundreds, if not thousands of succulent plants to choose from and each one has unique and different care requirements. Always check the plant's tag for specifics; or if that it is not complete on the tag, check on the Internet. You also need to ensure that plants you plant in the same pot have the similar needs.

Contrary to popular belief, most succulents do NOT need too much direct sunlight. In fact, they thrive best if they are exposed to direct light maximum for 3-4 hours. Most of these plants would risk getting scorched in the mid-day sun. Nonetheless, all need some bright,

indirect light. You would be surprised to learn that the succulents can actually suffer from sunburn, so be careful about how long and how much light you are exposing your plants.

I've found there are just six factors that will help ensure you have an amazing succulent container garden:

1. **Plant Choice** – get enough plants to fill your container comfortably
2. **Tools** - Plastic window screening, paper towel, and a piece of newspaper
3. **Cactus or succulent potting soil** – you can the potting soil bought or you could mix your own at home
4. **Shallow containers with good drainage** – it is important that the container be large and shallow so your could create a realistic garden
5. **Garden aides** – you will need stones, sea glass, gravel, or marbles for top dressing
6. **Bright Indirect Sunlight** – contrary to common belief, direct and prolonged exposure to light affects the plants negatively and can kill some succulents. Hence, you need to ensure that your plants get adequate light – not too much, not too less.

When choosing a container for succulent plants, make sure to use one that is shallow and large. Succulents and prefer shallow containers because they normally have a shallow root system.

Design Your Succulent Container Garden

Before you start designing try moving the plants around while they are still in their seedling form. Move them around until you find the arrangement that you like best. Do not try this after the seedlings are removed from their seedling containers to you will harm the roots and damage the plant.



When you are satisfied with your design, take out the succulent potting soil and add it gently around and in between the plants. While doing this, be careful that the level of the soil is maintained with the it had in its nursery pot. The new soil should not touch the crown (the part of the plant that meets the soil) of your succulent plant or it would damage it.

You also need to ensure that you have filled up with soil all the holes and spaces between the plants and also between the plants and the sides of the container. Unless you do this, the roots will dry out and kill your succulent plant.

After you have finished planting your container garden you will still have soil showing in between many of the succulent plants, which will make it look ugly and unkempt. To give your pot a finished look, choose topdressing to cover the soil. Topdressing is a very important step that most people ignore, overlook, or avoid. However, this is one a step that can make your container look like something professionally done; in other words, beautiful.

Ensure that you keep the soil moist, not wet during summer, spring and early fall. It is always better to allow the soil to get a little dry between watering; do not over-water as this will rot the roots and kill the plants. During the winter when your plants are dormant, you will need to water less frequently until the soil becomes dry on the outside, but moist inside. Use a diluted liquid fertilizer in quantities that depend upon the type of the succulent plant you have chosen.

CHAPTER 4. SIX KEYS TO A HEALTHY CONTAINER GARDEN

There are many factors that will ensure you have the perfect container garden. Among all those that have already been discussed a little earlier, you have to keep in mind the following five as the most vital for your success:

KNOW WHAT PLANTS YOU WANT

Have a list ready before you start with your container garden; it will help you plan your garden better. You need not narrow it to the exact names of the plants you would like to have; just knowing how many small, medium and large plants would be a good start. You could also make a list based on the light and water they need; the number of pots you would like to have; and so on. This would be your skeleton guide.

In most nurseries, plants are organized by how much sun they need. This is a good place to start with. Talk to the shopkeeper to help you finalize your list according to your preference, available light, height and rate of growth of the plants, budget and so on.

DRAINAGE

Contrary to common belief, adding pot shards, gravel, or stones to the bottom of your container garden, you will NOT improve drainage. You will be even told by some that you do not need drainage holes if you have these added to the bottom of your pots. This is incorrect; a myth that would kill your plants unless you are a highly experienced container gardener, who knows how much to water plants, or you are growing plants that prefer wet soil. You do need holes in your pots - lots of them – if you want your plants to thrive.

Unfortunately, most garden pots that are sold are not equipped with adequate holes for good drainage. Hence, you need to increase the drainage capacity, by drilling larger holes in your containers. The best size for a drainage hole is half-an-inch in diameter for medium and small sized pots. For the larger ones, ensure that the holes are at least an inch in diameter.

LIGHT

How much light is enough light? Many people underestimate or overestimate how much light their containers get. It is extremely important that you know quite accurately how much light your plants are receiving. Too much or too less would kill your plants or – at best – would stunt their growth and development. To find out how much sunlight your plant is getting, ensure that it is put in the place where it receive its light and then time it. Choose plants that either are suited to the amount of natural light you are getting, or arrange for artificial lighting as per the requirement of the plant.

FEEDING YOUR PLANTS

Most premixed potting soils come with already mixed-in nutrients for your plants; hence, you need not add anything for about 3-6 months. Read the instruction for accurate information. Once the grace period is over, you will need to add fertilizer to the soil of your plants. Slow release fertilizer is the best for your container plants. Use an organic potting soil and an organic fertilizer for best results.

Fertilizer every alternate week with a liquid fertilizer; use a seaweed blend or fish emulsion. In spite of the awful smell, it will give your plants all the required nutrition. Organic fertilizer is the best as it encourages the growth of benign bacteria, which is so important to the overall health of your plants.

MIX AND MATCH THE PLANTS WELL

When you are choosing plants for your container garden ensure that they match well together. In other words, you should choose such plants for one pot that would need the same amount light and moisture. Unless this is done correctly, you will never be able to get a healthy and lovely garden. For example, if you grow plants that love the full sun you should not mix these with plants that thrive in the shade. In such a case, both sets would die.



To know about the needs of each plant, check the plant tag or ask the salesperson. Alternatively, check it up on the Internet – there is enough information on most plants for which you seek information.

KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT EACH PLANT IN YOUR CONTAINER GARDEN

Learn everything you can about the plants you have chosen for your container garden. Focus on information that tells you how much light, water and food it needs and what type of care it will need. Find out whether the plant is annual or perennial; if perennial you would need to know that exact zones it would survive in.



You need to know how the plant will shape and how tall it will grow. This is important because you need to choose the right container size and design; you will also need this information so you could decide how to arrange your plants in the container and round your garden or home. For example, in a large container you will need ‘upright plants’ couples with plants that have ‘mounding habits’ to create an attractive design. You may like to also add, plants that have ‘trailing habits’ to spill over the sides of the container.

CHAPTER 5. MANAGING PESTS AND DISEASES WITH EASE

The good news with container gardening is that you will have much less headache with pests and diseases. You also have the choice and ability to completely isolate a sick plant, which means that you could contain the problem almost instantly – provided of course, you are keeping a daily watch upon your plants. Most often, if the container plants have access to enough fresh air and are not too crowded together, you should not have too much trouble containing both pests and diseases.

Do not worry; the fact that your plants still get attacked by various pests or diseases is NOT a reflection on your abilities. It really does not matter how good you are at caring for the plants in the container, pests and/ or diseases most certainly would put in an appearance. Just remember to stay calm when this happens and to immediately start with steps to fight them. Keep in mind however, that the though there are plenty of methods to remedy the damage post a pest attack or disease, that the best remedy is still prevention; the best prevention is still trying to grow the strongest, most beautiful plants, ever.

SOIL GONE BAD – THE MOST COMMON PROBLEM

Perhaps the most common of all the container gardens problems is neither insects nor diseases. Rather, the greatest problem is the soggy or sour soil. This happens when you have improper drainage conditions, which results in waterlogging. The telltale signs are leaves turning yellow and stunted new growth.

Fortunately, immediately after you correct the wrong conditions the plant will bounce back to the healthy and lovely plant it was before the attack. In some cases, it is best to remove the plant from the soil, wash the roots to check for any damage, clean the pot to eliminate the danger of fungus formation, and lastly repot the plant in a good porous fresh potting soil. Ensure that the container has good drainage. Keep the soil on the dry side until you observe unmistakable growth.

INSECT ATTACK

Normally, insects are to be feared for they indeed, do much more damage than any type of disease. One horrible characteristic of almost all plant insects is that they multiply at an alarming speed. You have a few today and – BANG – there are around a million tomorrow. This is no exaggeration!

This is why it is important to watch (inspect) your plants every day. If you get to the insects on time, it would be easy to contain the problem fast; if not, you will have quite some trouble getting rid of them; they might also spread to all other plants. Here are some of the most common insects that you would find in your container garden:

Aphids

The aphids or green plant lice are among the most common house plant pests. Once upon a time this was dreaded, but now there are ways by which the insects could be readily and effectively exterminated. You will find that there are many types and colors of these aphids. Every gardener would have at one time or another seen these pest insects.

Aphids will grow and be very happy in the shaded places among crowded potted plants, where you have poor ventilation and dry conditions. To prevent an aphids attack, remove all the environments that welcome it to your plants in the first place. This is prevention.

Post attack you could get rid of the aphids by spraying them off with water, or even submerging the plant under water – which is an exceptionally sound and effective natural aphid control.



Alternatively, you could use insecticidal soap which is available at all hardware stores, *etc.* You can also use an organic insecticide spray especially formulated to kill aphids noted. Be aware that this is highly toxic and hence it is not recommended for home use, especially if you have children and pets around.

Red Spider Mites

This is a spider-like pest, about the size of a grain of rice and red in color; sometimes appearing brown or dull red. This pest becomes invisible by staying hidden carefully under the leaves. You will recognize an infestation when the leaves of the attacked plant first turn light green, then show small yellow spots. If not checked, the leaves will turn yellow and drop off.

This is a bad pest for they are hard to get rid of, especially when they already have had time to establish their colonies. The best way to fight them off is to wash the plant with cold water splashed with force on the underside of the leaves. Red mites hate humidity; hence raising the levels of humidity will help. Other weapons in your arsenal would be evaporated sulphur, or flowers of sulphur dusted upon the affected leaves.



In case the attack has spread too much and the affected plant is not too large, a great way to eliminate the insects is to take it and dip it 2-3 times into HOT water that has been heated to about 140°F—165°F. Although uncomfortable to the hand, the hot water will not really affect (even the most tender of) plants. You can use this method to get rid of aphids and mealy bugs as well.

Mealy Bugs

The mealy bug infestation is easily recognized because the white cottony looking mass it generated all over the plants. When you remove this cover, you will find the mealy bug there. This pest loves soft-wooded plants, such as fuchsias and coleus. They grow best in hot and dry atmosphere. To disguise themselves and stay hidden from the view, they will stick a few leaves together and make their home there. You can find them only when they become too many in number – and by that this has become bad news for you.



The fastest way to get rid of them is by dipping a cotton ball in alcohol and applying this directly to the affected area; this will kill them on the spot.

Scale

There are two types of scales that may attack your container plants. These are the 'brown scale' and the 'white scale'. The brown one's body is slightly convex with a circular shell, which is about $\frac{1}{4}$ th of an inch in diameter. The white scale on the other hand, is much smaller, and lives in large, dense colonies.



Both love smooth-barked, thick-leaved plants, such as ferns, palms, abutilons and lemons. Initially, they do not appear to harm the plant, but they do as their food is the sap of the plant. Destroy these pests as soon as possible with the help of insecticidal soaps applied with a sprayer.

You can also use alcohol soaked cloths to apply right on the scales but this can be done only when you see the scales. Sometime, when the infestation is too much, the best thing to do is discard the whole plant before it spreads to others.

Thrips



These pests are not common to plants indoor, but they may appear in places where plants are too crowded in shady places. They eat the leaves from the underneath, leaving only the skeleton structure. They are very tiny - about 1/4th of an inch long - brown or black in color. You can fight them with insecticides made of pyrethrins or neem oil.

Root Aphids



Sometimes the leaves of a plant will suddenly yellow and drop – for no apparent reason. Check the roots of the plant when this happens. You may find that the plant is under the attack of blue root aphids. These insects which are as bad as their cousins – the aphids - will be clinging in clusters to the root feeding on them sapping away the nutrients of the plant. To get rid of them, remove the plant from the soil, wash away the soil from the roots and then dip the roots in insecticidal soap suds. Do this a couple of times and the re-pot in fresh sterile potting mix.

White Fly



It is the larvae of the white fly that is harmful to the plants. The eggs of this tiny insect fall onto the soil and they burrow deep in it. When they hatch they consume all the nutrients available leaving the plant nothing to feed on.

To destroy the larva, use lime water. Make a solution out of fresh lime the size of an apple in a pail of water and then draw the water in a container after settling – apply freely 2-3 times a week for a month until the larvae are completely eliminated.

House Plant Diseases – Fungus And Mildew



When it comes to diseases you have to worry about two that occur

most often, *i.e.* the fungus and mildew. The signs of fungus attack are the blackening of the leaves with a powdery residue coating. You can destroy it by pouring fungicide and hot water on the affected plant.

To prevent the fungus water your plants with hot water instead of cold.

When the plant is attacked by mildew, the leaves will curl up; they look like someone sprinkled them with white powder. To get rid of it, dampen the leaves and then dust flowers of sulphur all over the plant.

CONCLUSION

Now that you know all there is to know about container gardening, try it out. There is nothing to it as long as you start small and learn on your feet. It is easier than you would think, and it will give you immense personal satisfaction.

Start with material around your home initially, until you grow your green fingers. Research on the Net regarding your favorite plants and get them potted in small containers to learn all about them. As soon as you think you know them well enough, scale it up and start building your garden.

Be creative. Try your hand at all types of arrangements; with all types of plants and various types of containers. You will find that container gardening is a beautiful pastime with multiple benefits.

Happy gardening!

EXCERPT FROM THE INDOOR GARDENING BOOK

HOMEMADE REMEDIES FOR PEST CONTROL

The best way to fight pest infestations is with organic pesticides, which you can buy from your garden stores. Alternatively you can use some very simple to make yet very effective homemade pest control formulas!

1. For Mites, Aphids and Mealy Bugs)

Mix two teaspoons of canola oil (4 teaspoons of cayenne pepper or hot pepper sauce) and 4-5 drops of Dr. Bronner's soap into a quart of water. Put the mix into a spray bottle shake well and spray on the underside of the leaves of the plant. Remember, the mites live mostly underneath the leaves.

2. For Mildew

Mix water and milk in equal proportions. Pour in a spray bottle and spray it on the affected plant 3-4 times weekly.

3. For Fungus and Other Insects

Mix 4 teaspoons of baking soda into a quart of water and spray the mix on the plant every alternate day.

Make a mix with two teaspoons of cooking oil, 4 teaspoons of baking soda, 4-5 drops of Dr. Bronner's plain soap and a quart of water. Spray the affected plant every 2-3 days.

4. For Mites, Gnats and Most Other Predatory Insects

This is one of the drastic yet very effective methods to counter the pest problem. Buy predatory nematodes (quite inexpensive) and transfer them to your plants through watering it over the plants. Once they reach the soil, these predatory nematodes will kill all the thrip, mites, larvae, and gnats they find.

Diatomaceous Earth is another thing you could use to fight infestation of pests. This is a mix of silica dioxide, which – if you look at it under microscope – looks like razor blades. What you need to do is dust the leaves of your plants with this mix. Make sure to wet the leaves a little so the dust will stick properly. When the pests would want to bite, they would cut themselves and die.

PREVENTING FUNGUS AND MOLD IN YOUR INDOOR GARDEN

Fungi are wonderful organisms and they're responsible for most of life on Earth (there would be no soil without the fungi!). But certain types of fungi can infect your garden above the soil (this is known as foliar fungus) and below the soil (this is known as soil born fungus). The best way to control fungus is prevention. However, when fungus and mold gets out of control you can treat it with a good organic fungicide.

1. Foliar Fungus

This type of fungus will attack the leaves and stems of a plant. They will appear as dark spots or splotches on the foliage. These forms of fungus are common when you use cold water to water your plants. It is best to use warm (tepid) water for your plants especially when you are misting the leaves of your plants. It can also be caused when the humidity crosses over 60%. You will know that your plants are affected by the dark spots that appear on the leaves.

To prevent it from forming, use tepid water for your plants and keep a close eye on the hygrometer (apparatus to measure humidity). Also, install a vent fan to encourage air circulation and dissipate excess moisture in the air.

If the plant is already under attack, remove all the infected leaves immediately. Then, use an organic fungicide every 3-4 days until you are sure that your plants are safe and recovering.

2. Soil Born Fungus

This type of fungus will attack the roots of your plant and it will be visible on the surface of the soil in the initial stages. These types of fungus, like all others, proliferate when there's too much moisture. This often happens if the soil is retaining too much water retention owing to improper drainage. Sometimes, you may get an infected planting medium when you buy a potted plant or the soil may be infected as well.

To prevent soil born fungus you need to use sterile planting medium, and ensure proper drainage of the soil with the help of drainage holes at the bottom of the container and maintaining proper soil texture.

If the plant is under attack in spite of the preventive measures, use a biodegradable soap solution for the soil (1 oz Dr. Bronner's soap with 15 oz of water is what I use). The fungus would die after 3-5 applications. Ensure that you mix the fungicide as per the instructions and the drainage is proper.

[End of Excerpt] If you enjoyed reading this section from *Indoor Gardening: How To Grow Gorgeous Gardens Indoors With Ease*, you can grab your copy here: <http://amzn.to/WZri52>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Will Cook is the bestselling author of *Urban Gardening* and *Indoor Gardening*. Will is an avid gardener and loves growing his own fresh food on his balcony. Will believes the world would be a better place if everyone cared for a few plants and grew their own food (even if it's just a little bit).

Connect with Will on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/HmllNU>

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[Urban Gardening: How To Grow Food In Any City Apartment Or Yard No Matter How Small](#)

This is a fantastic book for anyone in the city who wants to grow a fabulous urban garden.

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This is a great book for anyone interested in learning how to grow vertical gardens which allow you to grow more food in less space.

[Indoor Gardening: How To Grow Gorgeous Gardens Indoors With Ease](#)

This book is perfect for anyone who wants to grow an indoor garden for food, fun or just to create a gorgeous ambiance in your home. Did you know that some plants can remove as much as 87% of the toxins in your home in just 24 hours?

[Raised Bed Gardening: How To Grow Vegetables and Food With Easy, Simple Raised Bed Garden Designs](#)

This gardening book is perfect for those of you who have a little space in your yard and want to grow lots of vegetables, food or flowers in a raised bed garden. It comes full of several designs that you can build yourself and is a lot of fun for the family gardener.

[Chicken Raising 101: How To Raise Chickens In Your Backyard for Eggs, Fun and Profit](#)

This is a wonderful guide to raising your own chickens at home. If you've always wanted your own chickens but don't know how to do it right, this book is for you!

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